

Complaints - General Information

The Board for Licensing Contractors oversees licensing of contractors, home improvement, limited licensed electricians and plumbers professions. They also approve contractor prelicensing exam course providers. They may only take disciplinary action for licensing violations under T.C.A. 62-6.

Complaint Inquiries

We encourage consumers to check out the complaint record prior to hiring. The main license search on the web to "Lookup a License" is at: <http://licsrch.state.tn.us/> and by clicking onto the license ID number, the "closed" complaint history will appear; open complaints will not be listed.

Should you contact our Board's "Complaint Section" to inquire about complaints, the staff will have information pertaining to closed cases; however, on "open" cases, they may only advise the amount of open complaints against a contractor and will not have details of the investigation. This information is with the legal section and is not considered public information until the case is "closed" and returned to our office.

Consumer residential complaints are also filed with the Division of Consumer Affairs and there is a "Problem Contractor List" compiled of licensed contractors failing to respond to complaints. This is part of the residential complaint mediation service known as CHAMP (Consumer Homeowner Accountability and Mediation Program). This consumer based complaint process allows the parties to agree on making repairs or corrections or to resolve residential construction issues without administrative disciplinary hearings. CHAMP has been a benefit to those who have hired a state licensed contractor.

In addition, you may want to contact the local Better Business Bureau or Federal Trade Commission to review recorded complaints.

Complaint Process

Throughout the complaint process, due process rights are assured to prevent a higher court from over-turning the Board's ruling. The final decision reached by the Board is based on the findings of an investigation and/or the outcome of a public formal hearing. This process is lengthy and could take several months. Complaints with the State are not meant to have a bearing on civil proceedings, but to evaluate if disciplinary action is warranted. The law which provides jurisdiction to the Board and Commission is T.C.A. Title 62, Part 6 and may be reviewed from the LexisNexis under Tennessee jurisdiction at: www.michie.com.

In some cases, the Board may authorize a consent order providing for a civil penalty to be assessed and sent to a licensee, however, a consent order is merely an offer of informal settlement (plea bargain) which the respondent (contractor) can accept or not. The case is not considered "closed" until the consent order is signed and the civil penalty has been paid. If the contractor does not respond or appeals the decision, the case remains "open" until the Board's attorney schedules a formal hearing. The Board could rule to revoke the license or suspend until the civil penalty and/or the cost of the hearing are paid. (Unlicensed contractor penalties are referred to the Attorney General or local District Attorney for collection.)